

Position Statement: Andrew Bentley

Most people I know in life, like to be involved in something they enjoy and care about. With this, a number of self-fulfilling endeavors come to mind: ice climbing, mountain biking, and harassing the neighbors occasionally. Those endeavors and others are well and good on their own merit. However, I have come to a point where I would like to contribute to something larger than myself. Because of this, I would like to express my intent to run for a seat during the upcoming election of the Wilderness Education Association Board.

There are number of reasons I believe you should consider me for part of the future organization leadership team of the WEA. Currently I am employed at SUNY Potsdam, a WEA affiliate using the 2+2 program. Because of the unique variety of the 2+2 program and my position as director of the climbing center, I am both educator and administrator. I am constantly connected with students of the WEA through year round contact, allowing me to stay in touch with trends and needs they have, and which the WEA should stay abreast of.

Like part of a good WEA course, objectivity in assessment should be a cornerstone for pushing organizational development and strategies. As a board member, I will approach strategic planning and other decisions with critical thought and professionalism based on finding best practices for forward movement. To this measure, I am interested in more explicit delivery and branding of the product of the WEA. I look forward to serving for the WEA if given the opportunity and thank you for your consideration.

Biographical Information

The weather of upstate Potsdam, New York is changing over to the cooler fall temps. Drew Bentley is excited as he associates this with his favorite outdoor activities. Although he might claim to be an avid hunter, he's actually more like an avid reader. Last season, the only thing he "bagged" during hunting season was having finished a Mark Twain classic, a couple issues of *Climbing*, and the somewhat frightening, *Fast Food Nation*. You can also find Drew making his way up Adirondack ice climbs in the winter and mountain biking the local singletrack in the warmer months with his students.

Drew will bring to the board a good mix of experience stemming from 10 years working in various field and leadership positions. He spent several seasons guiding commercial whitewater rafts on 3-5 day trips in Utah and Colorado. Then for several seasons with Outward Bound, he led 23-day, multi-element expeditions. Drew is a WEA NSP instructor and recently participated as a student on a WEA Pro-Short course this summer. As an educator himself, it was both enlightening and humbling to be in the student role, and one which reconnected him with the process he expects his students to be part of.

His educational background includes completing a Master of Science Degree, in Outdoor Recreation from Indiana University, Bloomington. As part of the degree, Drew completed a research study on motives for participation in collegiate outdoor programs. The results of this study were presented at the Association of Outdoor Recreation & Education national conference

in Buffalo, NY. Sharing knowledge and continuing education continues to be of high importance to him and he sometimes considers returning to pursue a PhD.

Currently, Drew maintains the Climbing Center at SUNY Potsdam, a liberal arts college of 4,000 students. He manages the day-to-day supervision of open climbing, schedules group reservations, and trains program managers and facilitators to operate the climbing wall and indoor high ropes course. He also teaches college courses as part of the Wilderness Education minor at SUNY Potsdam including, Leadership In Adventure Education, Backpacking, and Wilderness Leadership.